



British Embassy

3100 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington DC 20008

Telex Domestic USA 89-2370/89-2384

Telex International 64224(WUI)/440015(ITT)

Telephone (202) 462-1340

John Doble
Information Dept
F C O

Your reference

Our reference

Date 20 January 1983

Dear Mr Doble

FALKLANDS : US MEDIA COMMENT

As promised in our telegram of 19 January, I enclose copies of the articles in the US press both about the Franks Report and Mrs Thatcher's visit to the Falkland Islands. There is likely to be further comment about the Franks Report which we shall send you.

Scott
PPC V Anson
First Secretary (Information)

Enc.

cc Roger Westbrooke
Falkland Islands Dept
F C O

cc Ian Kydd
Press Office
No 10 Downing St

British Inquiry on Falkland War Clears the Thatcher Government

N. Y. T.
19. 1. 83.

By R. W. APPLE Jr.
Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Jan. 18 — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Government was officially cleared of blame today for Britain's failure to anticipate or prevent Argentina's capture of the Falkland Islands last April 2, which led to a two-month war in the South Atlantic.

The report of a committee of inquiry, which spent six months studying secret documents and interviewing dozens of Britons, came as a political tonic for the Prime Minister, who is expected to call a general election later this year. It was signed not only by the committee chairman, Lord Franks, an Oxford don who served as Ambassador to the United States 36 years ago, but also by the four other committee members, including two leading figures in the opposition Labor Party.

Although the report criticized some Government decisions and some intelligence assessments, it stated flatly in one of the key paragraphs of a closely printed 90-page text that "the invasion of the Falkland Islands could not have been foreseen." And it said there was

"no reasonable basis for any suggestion — which would be purely hypothetical — that the invasion would have been prevented if the Government had acted" in ways suggested by the five-man panel.

"We conclude," they wrote, "that we would not be justified in attacking any criticism or blame to the present Government for the Argentine junta's decision to commit its act of unprovoked aggression in the Falkland Islands."

Mrs. Thatcher was greeted with jeers from the opposition as she read sections of the report in the House of Commons this afternoon, and there were some critical comments later.

Adrian Moni, the London representative of the Falkland government, said the islanders would be surprised, adding, "I find it difficult to believe that there were no strong indications from Argentina, with all the maneuvers and stockpiling that were taking place, that

Continued From Page A1

the invasion would take place when it did."

Lord Franks and his colleagues said that Lord Carrington, then the Foreign Secretary, and his Foreign Office colleagues underestimated early last year the speed with which the crisis would develop. They also argued that the Foreign Office underrated the possibility that a stalemate in negotiations might prompt a sudden invasion — a prospect mentioned in a mid-1981 intelligence paper.

But the report said that the decision to invade, as opposed to simply increasing military pressure, was probably not made until March 31 or April 1. A warning was flashed to Mrs. Thatcher on March 31 by the British Embassy in Buenos Aires, the report went on, and after meeting with Cabinet colleagues, she called President Reagan that night to ask him to try to persuade Argentina not to take the final step.

The report specifically rejected as untrue charges published in British newspapers that the embassy sent a warning of an invasion on March 24, that American intelligence sources did likewise at about the same time, that Argentina made large purchases of British maps of the Falklands well before the invasion and that the captain of the survey ship *Endurance* sent an early warning that invasion was imminent.

So muted was the criticism of the Foreign Office, which had been expecting heavy criticism, that many politicians wondered aloud why Lord Carrington had resigned after what he called "a great national humiliation." He himself noted that the report suggested alternative methods of procedure. But he added: "It does not go on to suggest that that would have made any difference, and I think that is rather an important qualification. There were things, there are always things, that one could do better or do differently."

Ship Withdrawal 'Inadvisable'

The committee did say that it was "inadvisable" for the Government to have announced that it planned to withdraw the *Endurance*, a Royal Navy ship that regularly patrolled the Falklands, from service at the end of its 1981-82 tour.

Documents seen by the committee showed that the decision to scrap the *Endurance* — cited after the invasion by Mrs. Thatcher's critics as a signal to the Argentines that Britain did not take the islanders seriously — had been a subject of dispute within the Cabinet. Lord Carrington, the report said, wrote four times to Sir John Nott, then the Defense Minister, urging him to reverse the decision to withdraw the ship. The decision was not reversed until much later,

and the committee said that the refusal to change course was "inadvisable."

The committee also said that the Government's machinery for assessing intelligence should be overhauled. The Joint Intelligence Organization, which is responsible for such assessments, is "too passive in operation to respond quickly and critically to a rapidly changing situation which demanded urgent attention," the report said.

But no individual was singled out for criticism, which will probably mean that many diplomats and intelligence officers who had been considering resignation will remain in government service.

In a Boisterous Mood

The Commons chamber and the public gallery were packed as Mrs. Thatcher outlined the report's main conclusions. Lord Franks, a 78-year-old Liberal, was among the onlookers. The mood was boisterous, and the Prime Minister had difficulty in making herself heard, but no one directly challenged the thrust of the committee's findings.

A debate will be held next week, which will undoubtedly deal also with Mrs. Thatcher's determination to hold on to the Falklands no matter how difficult it is. Her trip there this month appears to have hardened her resolve not to enter into negotiations with Argentina, and she told the House today, "We have no option now except 'Fortress Falklands' if we are to continue, as I believe we should, to honor the wishes of the islanders."

The Falklands, a British colony since 1833, were recaptured in June with the loss of 255 British lives. This country now has a 4,000-man garrison there to protect 1,800 islanders, and it faces the outlay of tens of millions of dollars a year to garrison the islands and to improve military and commercial facilities there.

Continued on Page A3, Column 1

Panel Exonerates Thatcher on Falklands Invasion Preparedness

W.P.
19. 1. 83.

By Peter Osnos
Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Jan. 18—Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government could not have foreseen and probably could not have prevented Argentina's invasion of the Falklands last April 2 even if every hint in advance had been correctly assessed, an official investigation into the causes of the war declared today.

"We conclude," a blue-ribbon panel reported after a six-month inquiry, "that we would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present government for the Argentine junta's decision to commit its act of unprovoked aggression."

That exoneration of the Thatcher government—which the prime minister pointedly read out to Parliament this afternoon in presenting the eagerly awaited report—is the main political finding of a study based on complete access to intelligence assessments and official deliberations dating back to 1965. So sweeping is the conclusion that Thatcher's critics will be hard-pressed to score points against her based on what the investigation found.

Under the chairmanship of Lord Franks, a distinguished scholar and former ambassador to Washington, the panel asserts in its 106-page report that the invasion decision clearly was taken by the junta "at a very late date" and that the government could not, therefore, have had "earlier warning." Moreover, the report says, "there is no reasonable basis for any suggestion" that a different British policy as the crisis developed would have forestalled the Argentine action.

However, the report does note some shortcomings, particularly in the handling of intelligence. It notes a number of points in the months leading up to the war where "different decisions might have been taken, where fuller consideration of alternative courses of action... might have been advantageous and where the machinery of government could have been better used."

That these did not occur, the study suggests, was the fault, at least in part, of an inadequate assessment

Falklands Invasion

of Argentine intentions by the Joint Intelligence Organization. This is a coordinating group made up of officials from several government departments, under the leadership of the Foreign Office—which the report, in turn, also criticizes for underestimating certain signals from Buenos Aires.

If there is any direct consequence of today's report, it is likely to be a shake-up in the intelligence committee to give it greater independence from diplomats. The study says the group failed to credit adequately the increasing militancy of the Argentines in early 1982, both in the press

and through diplomatic exchanges. It said the committee relied on "secret intelligence which at that time was reassuring about the prospects of an early move to confrontation."

In addition, the study said, the impact of cumulative British actions, which might have given Argentina the idea that the Thatcher government would not react decisively to an invasion, was underestimated by the committee in predicting Argentine plans.

These included the decision, taken twice by successive governments, to withdraw the Falklands patrol ship of the Royal Navy, HMS

Endurance, to save money; plans to withhold full British citizenship from some of the 1,800 Falkland Islands residents, and the failure of two British governments to implement a 1976 report on developing the islands.

The study singles out no individuals for criticism. But neither does it question the resignation of foreign secretary Lord Carrington, who called the invasion a "national humiliation." Carrington was in Israel on March 31, the day British intelligence firmly reported that an invasion could take place on April 2.

In the months preceding, the

Preparedness

panel writes, the Foreign Office "did not attach sufficient weight... to the changing Argentine attitude... and did not give sufficient importance to the new and threatening elements in the Argentine government's position."

The Franks panel was created in July, a month after a British task force successfully reclaimed the Falklands. It had six members—two from the Conservative Party, two from Labor, Franks, who is a member of the Liberal Party, and a retired senior civil servant.

Opposition politicians clearly hoped to turn Thatcher's gains

popularity after the conflict into liabilities by pinning her and the government with the blame for not avoiding it. Despite the report's conclusions absolving Thatcher, Labor Party leader Michael Foot told Parliament that it showed "a complete collapse of effective Cabinet government," an apparent reference to Thatcher's dominance of decision-making and perhaps to the problems that were revealed in coordination of intelligence among ministries.

Thatcher, doubtless pleased and relieved at the panel's findings, praised it for producing a "thorough and comprehensive report in so short a time." Thatcher returned from a triumphal tour of the Falklands last week.

The U.S. role in advance of the war, as portrayed in the study, appears to have been small and there is no indication that American intelligence information played any part in Britain's underestimate of the Argentine plans.

Then-secretary of state Alexander M. Haig Jr. was informed by the British of "Argentine intentions" April 1. Interviewed by BBC television tonight, Haig said the United States had not been looking for and did not seek indications of the invasion in the weeks before it happened. On learning from the British that war was imminent, the study said, President Reagan then attempted to persuade the junta leader, Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, by telephone not to invade. But he was unsuccessful.

W.P.

19. 1. 83.

Mrs. Thatcher to the Falklands

The Post's Jan. 13 editorial, "Mrs. Thatcher's Journey," cannot be allowed to pass without comment. The Post says that her "dedication to the Falklands continues to astonish"; well, it certainly does not astonish me. The fact that it does astonish The Post only goes to prove how little the newspaper has understood the feelings—indeed, the passions—generated by the unsuccessful Argentine takeover attempt last year.



As an expatriate Briton, I felt the stirring of patriotic feelings that I did not even know existed. As a child growing up in London, I was always aware of the Falklands and of our fellow citizens across the sea. For a British government to have allowed this illegal seizure would have been unthinkable.

Having made the sacrifice to regain the territory, the prime minister certainly does not need the permission of Washington or Buenos Aires to pay a visit. Even a long-time Labor Party supporter such as myself would be sorely tempted to vote for Mrs. Thatcher should I return home. I never thought the day would come!

MARION BARBER

Washington

Inquiry says Thatcher can't be

By Robert A. Erlandson
London Bureau of The Sun

London—Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government could neither have foreseen nor prevented Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands April 2, an independent inquiry concluded yesterday.

The 110-page report, the unanimous product of a six-member independent committee of privy councillors with broad authority that included two members of the opposition Labor Party, said the government could not have foreseen the invasion. The Buenos Aires junta decided on the act as late as March 31 or April 1, the report said.

Further, the committee said the inquest "would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present government" for creating conditions that could have led to the Argentine decision to invade.

The report was released yesterday just as Mrs. Thatcher began a statement on it in the House of Commons. A formal debate on the

report will be held later, after members of Parliament have been able to study it.

But Labor MPs, particularly those who had opposed the war throughout, saw themselves robbed by the report's chief conclusions of a club with which to beat Mrs. Thatcher's government and responded by starting a series of rancorous exchanges.

This led Mrs. Thatcher to comment that "they do not like the conclusions of this independent report" and to point out that the two Labor members of the committee subscribed to it.

The report criticizes some decisions that might have encouraged the Argentine government. For instance, it was decided to withdraw the patrol ship *Endurance*—but the decision was not implemented before the invasion. And Britain planned to sell the aircraft carrier *Invincible* to Australia—but that decision was rescinded during the war.

But the committee said it was "impossible to judge" what impact on the junta different decisions might have had.

The committee was headed by Lord Franks, 77, provost of Worcester College, Oxford, and former ambassador to Washington. Lord Franks is one of the most respected men in British public life. In fact, his was the only name all political parties could agree on to head the inquiry, which began in July.

The committee said British intelligence assessment procedures had failed to predict Argentine intentions, based on the junta's actions, and it urged a review of them.

There were periodic reports in Argentine newspapers of the military's intention and reaffirmations of Argentina's objective of regaining the Malvinas, as the Falklands are called in Argentina. It has been said those reports should have gone far toward tipping off British intelligence to the imminence of the invasion.

The report generally cleared Lord Carrington, who resigned as foreign secretary after the invasion. When the islands were seized, Lord Carrington protested that he had acted properly; nevertheless, he felt that the

BART.

THE SUN, Wednesday, January 19, 1983

blamed for attack on Falklands

weight of public opinion was so overwhelmingly against the Foreign Office that he had no choice but to leave and spare Mrs. Thatcher further embarrassment.

The report cleared the Foreign Office of allegations that it had been working for years to "get rid" of the Falklands and turn them over to the Argentines, but it said the diplomats had not taken sufficiently seriously warning signs that Argentina's attitude was hardening.

The committee did accuse Foreign Office ministers and officials of misjudging Argentine intentions last year during the period when negotiations were still continuing despite rejection by both the Falklanders and Parliament of a plan to cede sovereignty to Argentina and lease back the islands for a long period.

London published a joint communique saying talks were continuing—but Buenos Aires did not. This ominous sign was apparently underestimated.

The report said the Foreign Office was unduly influenced by Argentina's history of making threatening noises about the islands, but not carrying them through. Once the lease-back proposal was rejected, Argentina was left with nothing but the prospect of endless negotiations because Britain made it clear that sovereignty would not be ceded.

In the Commons yesterday, Labor's James Callaghan told Mrs. Thatcher that her policies had left Britain with "the worst possible option—Fortress Falklands."

Prime Minister Thatcher told her predecessor that so long as Argentina refuses to declare an end to hostilities, Britain has no option but "Fortress Falklands" if it is to honor its commitment to the islands' 2,000 inhabitants.

The British death toll in the brief war was 255 dead and 777 wounded. The cost is estimated at nearly \$4 billion.

On the Argentine side, the officially acknowledged death toll was 750, but unofficially it is believed to have been closer to 1,000.

N.Y.T.

14. 1. 83.

Saving Face or the Falklands?

Prime Minister Thatcher's bold trip to the Falklands showed that in one sense she is capable of movement. But her Government's South Atlantic policy is another matter: it lies dead in the doldrums. By evading negotiations on the ultimate sovereignty of the islands, Mrs. Thatcher risks appearing just as stiff-necked and chauvinist as the Argentine junta she defeated.

The junta deserved its drubbing. It violated law by grabbing the Falklands, then violated sense by rejecting a British offer — now withdrawn — before much blood was shed. A good part of the world, including the United States, rallied to Britain's support when the islands were retaken at a cost of hundreds of British and Argentine lives and billions of dollars.

But Mrs. Thatcher is wrong to construe that support as endorsement of a British claim to the Falklands. That was never the case. The question of who owns these islands is old, tedious and murky. What

is clear is that Britain has no vital interest in permanent possession of every fogbound foot of them. The Union Jack need not fly indefinitely over the Falklands for Britain to uphold the interests of some 1,800 settlers.

Various plans for fudging sovereignty were on the agenda before Argentina's rash invasion. Britain should revive them, and consider fresh proposals for putting the Falklands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands under an international protectorate. One would think that everyone under the British flag would prefer that solution to the four-year, \$4.8 billion military buildup that is needed to "protect" the Falklands.

In response to reckless Argentine aggression, misgivings were brushed aside about the origins and conduct of what some called "the war of Thatcher's face." It may yet earn that name if she fails to lead Britain and the Falklands toward a permanent disposition that is sensible, just and secure.

W.P.

13. 1. 83.

Mrs. Thatcher's Journey

MARGARET THATCHER'S dedication to the Falklands continues to astonish. She has just made the grueling 23-hour, 8,000-mile flight to help the residents celebrate the 150th anniversary of Britain's takeover of the islands from Argentina. To be sure, any place worth sending troops to fight and die for—the British toll was 255—is worth a prime minister's visiting. But in making the visit, Mrs. Thatcher nails Britain more firmly into a position it will eventually have to abandon.

To see why, you must realize that the 23-hour, 8,000-mile flight is not merely a measure of Mrs. Thatcher's patriotism but of the true isolation of the Falklands. Latin solidarity with Argentina has meant that civil air service from the mainland has not resumed, and probably will not resume so long as the British insist that the sovereignty of the islands is not negotiable. Sovereignty was on the table for the 17 years of fruitless negotiation before the war came last April, but Mrs. Thatcher took it off as

the British fleet closed. British title is now no less legally clouded than it had been for the previous 150 years. But Mrs. Thatcher stands on a position that precludes an ultimate settlement.

Meanwhile, since the Argentine grievance remains raw, the islands must be defended. A light defense will not do, given Argentina's invasion last spring and Mrs. Thatcher's embarrassment for not having been adequately prepared for it. The cost of recapturing the islands, garrisoning them for four years and making them livable is estimated at about \$4.8 billion—on the order of \$3 million for each of the 1,600 Falklanders—out of a defense budget now running at \$25 billion a year. Even for a country whose economy was not a disaster area, this would be an immense bill to pay.

Britain's friends owe their best judgment: the wise course is to find a way to turn sovereignty over to Argentina under conditions ensuring fair treatment of the interests of the islanders. We still don't think that's an impossible dream.

BALT. SUN

19. 1. 83.

'Fortress Falklands'

Fresh from her surprise visit to the Falkland Islands, Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is enjoying a second triumph—the conclusion by a special commission that her government could not have foreseen or averted the Argentine invasion last April 2. Mrs. Thatcher had known for a fortnight that an exoneration was coming. While her critics were led to speculate that her 8,000-mile journey to the South Atlantic was planned to offset adverse findings, the prime minister deftly fashioned an upbeat beginning to what could be an election year.

While in the Falklands, she told the 1,800 islanders that "in the end, everyone knew you were British and wanted to remain British." Back in London, she said "we have no option now except 'Fortress Falklands,' if we are to continue, as I believe we should, to honor the wishes of the Falkland Islanders." The Falklands issue promises to be one of the prime minister's trump cards. It identifies her with British glory while her opponents appear as hand-wringers. What must worry her, however, is whether the Falklands euphoria can endure in the midst of a plummeting pound, high unemployment and inflation, and growing sentiment for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Britain seems to be stuck with a Falklands com-

mitment that makes no more economic and military sense today than it did a year ago. At that time, Whitehall was still negotiating with Argentina over a series of proposals that ranged from a freezing of the status quo to an arrangement under which Argentina would get sovereignty over the islands and lease them back to Britain. The aim then was to get rid of the islands while somehow meeting the mother country's obligations to a small number of faraway "kelpers." Now what?

The war so unwisely launched and lost by Argentine militarists is over, to be sure, but the enmity from last spring's fighting endures. And so Britain is left without air links between the Falklands and the South American mainland. It has to maintain a garrison of 4,000 men, plus support ships and aircraft, at a sizable cost that detracts from its commitments to NATO. Its relations with almost all of Latin America are frayed.

President Reagan, swayed by admiration for Mrs. Thatcher, said her Falklands journey showed she is "the best *man* in England." Nevertheless, Washington has to distance itself from Britain's emotional attachment to the Falklands. Having tilted to a European ally in the midst of war, this country now needs to re-emphasize its hemispheric ties and its interest in a negotiated settlement.

NEW HAVEN REGISTER 12/11/83
Mrs. Thatcher visits the Falklands

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is making a big hit with her visit to the Falkland Islands. She has been received enthusiastically by residents of the islands, has been photographed learning how to fire a 105 MM artillery piece and has been given the first-ever "Freedom of the Falklands" award. As the Englishmen usually say after they have gunned down all the Nazis in the World War II movies, it's been a "jolly good show."

Whether the long-range impact of the visit will be all that jolly is another question. While the prime minister has described her visit as "a profoundly moving experience," others think it is no more than a profoundly public relations stunt that will only make it more difficult to settle the Falklands' issue once and for all. Mrs. Thatcher's political opponents at home claim the trip was undertaken to defuse a soon-to-be-released report that criticizes her government for the way it handled the war, or to take the attention of the British public off such domestic problems as unemployment.

They argue that her visit is a provocation to Argentina, which may have lost the war, but still claims the islands; and that it is an irritant to other Latin American nations which, rightly or wrongly,

see it as a vainglorious demonstration of British colonialism in their own backyard.

It does seem that, having won the war, the British might better concentrate on an equitable solution to the Falkland Islands problem rather than rubbing the noses of the Argentines in the dirt. It is a fact of geographical life that the islands are thousands of miles from Great Britain and only several hundred miles from Argentina. It is a fact of political life that retaining the islands is going to become more costly and less attractive for Great Britain with the passage of time. Given these facts, it would make sense for Great Britain to adopt a conciliatory, rather than a provocative, policy now. In this case especially, generosity would befit the victor.

From a strictly selfish viewpoint, Mrs. Thatcher certainly doesn't do the United States any favors when she makes a triumphal visit to the Falklands. The Reagan administration took a lot of flak from Latin American nations for its decision to stand by Great Britain in the war. Since the war, the administration has spent a lot of time and effort attempting to mend our fences in Latin America. It does not help our fence-mending effort when the British prime minister goes out of her way to remind the Argentines and all Latin Americans about how Britain whipped them.

New York Daily News - Sat. 15 Jan. 83.

Waving the Union Jack

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's journey to the Falkland Islands provided plenty of grabby television newsreel footage for the folks back home and probably boosted her political stock. There were lots of stirring shots of loyal subjects greeting Maggie as their "liberator" and paying homage with her at the graves of British soldiers killed in the bloody campaign to retake the colony from invading Argentine forces last year.

But with all the flag-waving, the journey underscored the futility of Thatcher's policy of maintaining a large military presence in a place 8,000 miles and 23 hours flying time from London—a tremendous expense to a nation that is in the throes of a deep financial crisis.

And her repeated statements that Britain will never accede to Argentine claims on the islands soured the trip by stirring up new anti-British feelings in Buenos Aires. By now, Thatcher should at least be accepting the notion of negotiations, perhaps through the United Nations.

Surely, it's high time for Thatcher to take the high road of conciliation and work with the Argentines on a formula for the Falklands that will, at the same time, protect the rights of the 1,800 Britons living there.

Daily News, Saturday, January 15, 1983

Ian Kydd



With the compliments of
THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Mr Graham

Very positive coverage of Frank's
but less so on the PM's
visit to the Falklands - I have
highlighted the more critical
aspects.

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

W 25/

Mr Giles
to see

Ian Kydd

I think John likes that
See leaders of M